

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today called on Congress to build an "energy independent America" that utilizes clean energy technologies to end America's dependence on foreign sources of oil and help solve the growing climate crisis. Mitchell made his remarks as former Vice President Al Gore testified before Congress today.

Mitchell has been a stalwart advocate for America's energy independence, and was a co-sponsor of the CLEAN Energy Act earlier this year, which passed the House with a bipartisan 264-163 vote. The CLEAN Energy Act repeals billions of dollars in indefensible tax giveaways to Big Oil and invests in new clean energy technologies that will reduce America's dependence on foreign sources of fuel.

He also voted in favor of H.R. 547, the Advanced Fuels Infrastructure Research and Development Act, which passed the House overwhelmingly. The legislation works to move the United States closer to energy independence by making bio-fuels more affordable and accessible to retailers and consumers.

Gore testified before members of the House Science and Technology Committee and Energy and Commerce Committee. Mitchell is a member of the House Science and Technology Committee.

Mitchell made the following statement:

"Just a few weeks ago, in the findings of the International Panel on Climate Change, many of the world's most renowned scientists unanimously agreed that human activity is 'very likely' causing global warming.

"It's happening right before our eyes. Ice caps are melting. Weather patterns and climates are changing. Drought is ravaging through parts of the world. The consequences are real.

"The consequences are especially real in my home state of Arizona.

"In Arizona, we are experiencing longer and more severe fire seasons. Rain pattern changes and insect migration are destroying our forests. As snow pack decreases in the Rocky Mountains, Arizona feels the heat - literally. We're experiencing lengthy droughts that could become even more troublesome in managing our water as our population continues to grow.

"For the people I represent, the time for debate about the existence of global warming is over. Now, it's time for action. And it's important that we take action in a thoughtful and bipartisan way.

"Congress can help solve this crisis by leading the way to an energy independent America. An America powered by clean energy technologies such as solar energy and biofuels ends our dependence on Middle Eastern oil, and reduces the harmful greenhouse gases we emit to our atmosphere.

"I believe we can use American's ingenuity, and our unique innovative spirit to become energy

independent. But it will take work on our part, and a real investment in the future of our country. We began that investment earlier this year with the CLEAN Energy Act, but we still need to do more.

"I'm proud that one of the most dedicated leaders in taking action is here with us today. Vice President Al Gore is a distinguished former member of the House Science and Technology Committee and helped lead the first Congressional hearings on the issue of global warming.

"I hope that leaders such as Vice President Gore will continue to inspire the American people and international community to learn about the consequences of global warming and continue to turn our concern into action.

"Vice President Gore has said on more than one occasion that this is a moral issue. I agree, and I believe the United States has a moral obligation in leading the way to solving the climate crisis.

"We have an obligation because although we make up only four percent of the world's population, we produce 25 percent of the world's greenhouse gases.

"I hope Congress will use this opportunity to make serious steps toward energy independence and solving the global climate crisis."